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The Robe

BY LLOYD C. DOUGLAS



LIKE so many others throughout the centuries, Lloyd C. Douglas, author of *Magnificent Obsession* and *Disputed Passage*, wondered what became of the seamless robe that the Roman soldiers gambled for at the Crucifixion. He knew of no story about it, but felt there should be one — and at last he ventured upon this singular task himself.

Douglas' novel — THE ROBE — has become a modern classic, translated into many languages and read by millions in many lands.

The protagonist of the drama is Marcellus Gallio, son of a distinguished Roman family. He is proud, stalwart, an obedient soldier of the emperor, and faithful to Diana, the high-born maiden whom he loves above all others. When Marcellus is given command of the crucifixion of Christ, he does not hesitate to carry out his orders, although he finds the assignment most distasteful. And when, at the toss of the dice, he wins the robe which had been worn by the condemned Galilean, he thinks little more about it.

That night, however, at an officers' banquet, Marcellus is persuaded to put on the garment. As the rough homespun of the robe enfolds him, and drunken laughter echoes in his ears, a wave of disgust suddenly engulfs him. Marcellus flees the banquet hall. From that moment they call him "mad," for indeed he does seem curiously afflicted. He speaks to no one, and sinks into a brooding melancholy. Even Diana fails to ease his torment of guilt and self-loathing.

Only one man seems to understand Marcellus' anguish and the strange influence which the robe seems to exert. For Demetrius, his loyal slave, is a believer in the Son of God. They journey, the two of them, to the land where Christ had lived and taught and performed

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His miracles, and there it is, after many long months of groping and searching and wonderful spiritual growth, that Marcellus finds his own soul. From this point the tale moves on relentlessly to a climax that is as poignant as it is shattering.

THE ROBE is a long, full-bodied novel, rich in the color of the ancient world. Here is all the splendor of imperial Rome and the turbulence of Jerusalem in an era of ferment. The whole panorama of a pagan world amassed against a growing Christianity has seldom been made so vivid and immediate. And the story of one man's search for truth makes a potent impact on the memory of all who read THE ROBE.

Lloyd C. Douglas

Found fiction the surer medium for his ideas

BORN in Indiana in 1877 as the son of a village parson, Lloyd Cassel Douglas decided at an early age to prepare for the ministry. To help pay college expenses he played the organ in a church and worked as a newspaper reporter.

In 1903 he began his career as a minister, and a year later married the daughter of another clergyman. Together they served churches in Washington, Ann Arbor, Akron, Los Angeles and Montreal.

Douglas had written a number of essays on subjects of deep concern to him, then decided that through the medium of fiction he could reach a much larger public. The result was *Magnificent Obsession* (1929) which went almost unnoticed for two years then suddenly skyrocketed to the top of the best seller list. This was followed by *Forgive Us Our Trespasses*, *Green Light*, and *White Banner*. THE ROBE (1942) made modern publishing history. Six years later he wrote *The Big Fisherman*, an impressionistic biography of Simon Peter which is credited with the largest advance sale of any novel ever published.

Lloyd Douglas died in 1951, in his seventy-fourth year.

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a wholesome counselor, a cheerful companion,
an effectual comforter.*

— BARROW

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